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For Director of Foreign Assistance Tobias and EAP A/S Hill

From Ambassador

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [AMGT](#) [MG](#)  
SUBJECT: Keep the USAID Mongolia Mission Open

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¶1. (SBU) I was extremely distressed to learn that consideration is being given by USAID Washington to save \$334,000 in FY 2008 by removing the mission's sole U.S. Direct Hire USAID officer and closing the USAID Mission in Ulaanbaatar. I rely on the USAID Mission not just for on-the-spot program management, but also for critical policy advocacy with Government of Mongolia officials and with other donors. ESF funding of \$6.2 million for Mongolia would remain, but we would lose our human multiplier that makes our aid here so effective. Modest U.S. aid energetically administered by our USAID Mission ensures that continuing problems are addressed and Mongolia remains a transformational success story.

¶2. (SBU) Closing the USAID Mission would send an exceptionally negative message to Mongolia, a message exactly contrary to the assurances President Bush personally offered publicly in Ulaanbaatar 17 months ago during his visit that the U.S. stands by Mongolia during its transformation. It would cast a chill on this year's presidential meeting that is expected after the President Bush's personal invitation last month to his Mongolian counterpart to visit Washington this year to deepen our bilateral relationship as we celebrate our 20th anniversary of relations. Actions speak volumes. Closing our USAID Mission at this time would send the wrong message to Mongolia, a faithful ally which has sent troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, and last month made the politically tough decision to continue its dangerous and critical deployment to Iraq, following President Bush's telephonic request. It also has cooperated with the U.S. in providing humanitarian treatment for North Korean refugees, and is a regional UN peacekeeping leader, working closely with our Pacific Command in Honolulu.

¶3. (SBU) Moreover, Mongolia is a transitional role model for other countries trying, less successfully, to transition from socialist centralism to open democracy. What we do here therefore carries symbolic weight far beyond Mongolia's borders.

¶4. (SBU) This Embassy will continue to share the burdens of dealing with a tough budgetary climate, fully realizing that some further economies may be required. But beheading our transformational assistance program in this bellwether new democracy and close strategic partner country would be a mistake and detrimental to U.S. interests.

MINTON